

*Vocational Training Co-ordination Act*

When a minister makes a statement I do not think it is his business to read a report which every hon. member can get. I am speaking to the resolution and am dealing with the principles of the resolution. Most of the information that has been asked for this afternoon by hon. gentlemen could have been obtained from the report on vocational training if they had taken the trouble to read it.

Other hon. gentlemen have referred to the responsibility of the federal government in connection with vocational training and education generally. The hon. member for Regina City (Mr. Probe) developed the history of technical education from the federal point of view. A royal commission was appointed in 1910 by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and one of the members of that commission was a personal friend of mine. The sum of ten million dollars was voted and spent in co-operation with the provinces in establishing technical training schools throughout the dominion. Even up to this day there is at least one province which has not spent its portion of that ten million dollars.

It is quite easy to rise in one's place in this house and talk about spending millions and millions. I have a vivid memory of a little Scotch town. A man who had been born in that town came to North America and made a fortune in the steel industry. He gave his home town a magnificent library, a swimming pool and a vast park but he gave them so much that he impoverished the community which tried to maintain them.

Whether we like it or not, the provincial governments have jurisdiction over education. I wonder what some hon. members would say if it were suggested that, because of the money being spent by the dominion, we should take over education in the provinces. It is quite easy to get up and say what we should do for education as a federal government, irrespective of the party in power, but the fact remains that the provinces are jealous of their prerogatives.

I do not know of any provincial government that is in destitute circumstances today. I know of no time in the history of this country when the provincial governments have had greater surpluses than at the present time. One hon. gentleman referred to the need for this type of education. I want to say that I have never seen a man who could handle a hammer, saw or file who was destitute under normal circumstances.

Mr. CAMPBELL: What is the file for?

Mr. MITCHELL: To file some sense into the brains of some hon. members. I have tried [Mr. Mitchell.]

to express myself in simple language. If I had made my remarks complicated so that the hon. member for Regina City could not understand them he would have thought it was wonderful. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) says that I could not.

Mr. KNOWLES: I interrupt sometimes, but this time I did not say a word.

Mr. MITCHELL: I was greatly impressed by the observations of the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggart (Mr. Coldwell) about the placement of these people after they have been trained. I think we have made great strides in connection with the special placement department of the unemployment insurance commission which handles handicapped people. We are considering setting up vocational guidance departments in the communities in which we have offices established. Technical education is a slowly growing thing. Rome was not built in a day and neither will this scheme come to full fruition in twenty-four hours after the foundation has been set.

Mr. COLDWELL: Are you giving special training to placement officers in view of the large number of classifications that exist?

Mr. MITCHELL: Yes, and I will tell you where I got the idea from. They did it when I was a youngster in England. I do not know that there is much more I need say until we are in committee on the bill.

Someone referred to the hardships suffered by veterans. I am not talking about the married veteran. I think that even a veteran—like many hon. members I was a veteran myself of the first great war—in order to obtain a university education should make some contribution and sacrifice for that education. The best students are those who do so. If the state provides a measure of support during the school term, it is the obligation and the duty of the student during the vacation period at least to endeavour to augment the amount of money provided by the state.

Let me say that my department has a special division for finding employment for veterans who are attending university. It has been very successful. Only yesterday I received a letter from a student in the United States. He said that his American friend said that he wished the employment service in that country had the same kind of organization. We all know that there are not enough universities in this country to permit all the men and women who were engaged in the last war to avail themselves of a university education, notwithstanding the generous assistance rendered by the